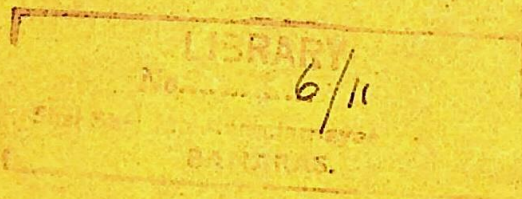


SHREE ANANDAMAYEE
AND
PURAN PURUSH
AT
NAIMISHARANYA



by

Sri R. K. Banerjee

PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF MATAJI'S SADHABHISHEKA CELEBRATION.

(80TH BIRTHDAY—MAY 1976)

An Interesting and Inspiring Interview

Question: People say you are Mother. Where are your sons and daughters?

Mataji: Here (pointing to Her breast).

Question: Where is your husband?

Mataji: Here (with the same gesture).

Question: Where are your parents?

Mataji: (With a smile) Here, within this heart.

Question: Your home?

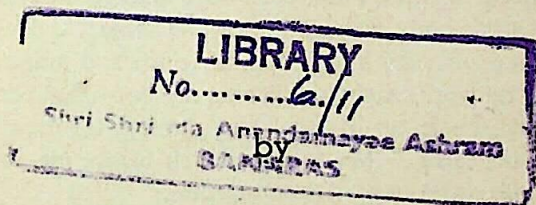
Mataji: (With the same gesture) Here.

The lady who was putting these questions looked completely puzzled, failing to comprehend what Mother had said. Mother noticed it and in Her usual soothing, convincing manner said: Here in this body lie all things in the universe—father, mother, son and daughter—all created beings. From this One, all have come into being. In the One all exist, all persist and finally merge.

Thanks to 'Ananda Varta' from which this is reprinted.

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AND
PURAN PURUSH
AT
NAIMISHARANYA**

PRESENTED



SRI R. K. BANERJEE, Calcutta.

This publication is a free gift as Prasad from Sri Mataji on Her 80th Birth-day celebration at Colombo, Sri Lanka. Any one who is keen on having a copy of it for permanent record is kindly requested to apply to the Talangama or Nawalapitiya address as quoted, enclosing stamps to the value of twenty five cents to cover postage.

THE BENGALI 'JOY-PERMEATED MOTHER'

"Please tell me something of your life."

"Father knows all about it; why repeat it?" She evidently felt that the factual history of one short incarnation was beneath notice.

I laughed, gently repeating my request.

"Father, there is little to tell." She spread her graceful hands in a deprecatory gesture. "My consciousness has never associated itself with this temporary body. Before I came on the earth, Father, 'I was the same.' As a little girl, 'I was the same.' I grew into womanhood, but still 'I was the same.' When the family in which I had been born made arrangements to have this body married, 'I was the same.' And when, passion-drunk, my husband came to me and murmured endearing words, lightly touching my body, he received a violent shock, as if struck by lightning, for even then 'I was the same.' My husband knelt before me, folded his hands, and implored my pardon.

"Mother, he said, because I have desecrated your bodily temple by touching it with the thought of lust—not knowing that within it dwelt not my wife but the Divine Mother—I take this solemn vow: I shall be your disciple, a celibate follower, ever caring for you in silence as a servant, never speaking to anyone again so long as I live. May I thus atone for the sin I have to-day committed against you, my guru."

"Even ^{as} I quietly accepted this proposal of my husband's, 'I was the same.' And, Father, in front of you now 'I am the same.' Ever afterward, though the dance of creation change around me in the hall of eternity, 'I shall be the same'."

— Sri Paramhansa Yogananda

(*Extract taken from his famous book, 'Autobiography of a Yogi'*)



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE
Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram
BANARAS.

This booklet is published on the solemn occasion of Shree Anandamayee Ma's Sadhabhisheka Ceremony (80 years completion) on 9th May 1976, with Her kind permission and blessings. As is well-known, she shuns publicity. Though born as a Saint and worshipped as such by millions, she gave permission for a Sangha to be established in Her name only when she was 54 years old. It has no branches outside India. This is unique and has great spiritual significance.

The booklet has two parts: One dealing with the discovery and development of Naimisharanya under the inspiration and direction of Mataji, by Sri R. K. Banerjee, an old and ardent devotee. This event opens a new era in Kaliyuga in the history of Hinduism. Naimisharanya is one of the most ancient and sacred places in India where Rishis did *tapas* and where Rishi Vyasa, compiler of the four Vedas, the most ancient religious scriptures available in the world, composed the eighteen Puranas. Our grand mothers and great-grand mothers had intimate knowledge of this place, and the holy names of sages like Suka Devar and Soothemamuni who recited those Puranas, were constantly on their lips. Among the great Buddhist leaders of Sri Lanka who had similar knowledge, the name of Venerable Siri Rahula Maha Thero of Totegamuwa during the reign of Parakrama Bahu VI of Kotte, deserves special mention here. He was the dominant literary personality of the age, and was renowned as Sadbhasa-Parameshwara and Tripiitaka-Vagiswaracharya. It is said that Sanskrit scholars and Tamil Pundits from South India used to come and reside at his Pirivena to learn languages and religious

literature including Puranas. It is also claimed that Ven. Siri Rahula had a vision of Lord Skanda after reciting His Purana in both Sanskrit and Tamil. The inspired and inspiring Sanskrit poem, Sri Skanda Kumara Stotra (Murugan Namashtakam), saved from old ola manuscript and published in Sinhalese transliteration and commentary by Mr. W.A.D. Ramanayake, Engineer, Colombo, was presumably one of Ven. Siri Rahula's works. This Stotra later came out in Tamil too in two editions for free distribution among Kataragama devotees.

The Puranas occupy a unique position in the sacred and secular literature of the Hindus. As is well-known, they are a mine of information regarding almost all the branches of human knowledge easily interpreted to the common people. Ma attaches great importance to teaching the masses religion through Puranas and Epics. But we wonder how many of the Hindu Professors, Lecturers, Principals and teachers of our universities, colleges and schools today understand Naimisharanya or attach any significance to the Puranas composed there! It is not unlikely that some of the orthodox Saivaite scholars and Tamil Pundits of South India and North Ceylon—the anti-Sanskrit and single language chauvinists—may even take us to task for dealing with these things in modern times, saying that Naimisharanya was after all a Vaishnavite Kshetra, and thus displaying their colossal ignorance of the fact that out of the eighteen Puranas composed by Sage Vyasa ten related to Saivism!

The second part of the booklet gives some extracts from the concluding chapter of the inspired and inspiring book 'Mother as revealed to me' by Sri Jyotish Chandra Roy, one of the earliest and close associates of Mataji. When Ma and her husband, Sri Ramani Mohan Chakravarti left Bengal for Dehradun in 1932 he was their only companion. Both Ramani and Jyotish were spiritually advanced souls. Ma addressed them as 'Pitaji' (Father) and Bhajiji

(elder brother) respectively. All Her devotees followed that example. Both of them repeatedly begged Her to give them the Sannyasa initiation. She delayed it till they reached the ego-less state, and ultimately fulfilled their sincere and earnest desire,—to Jyotish at sacred Kailash in 1937 and to Ramani at Hardwar in 1938. Stangely enough, both had their transition soon after receiving Sannyasa Mantra and Mataji was the person to nurse them during their last illness. If Pitaji mainly looked after the comforts of Ma's devotees who flocked to Her in thousands, Bhaiji acted as a sort of unofficial secretary. Even such highly placed persons as Mrs. Kamala Nehru, when she was physically unfit to travel to Ma's Ashram for Her blessings in person, used to write to Bhaiji often to send by post Her blessings. She was a sincere devotee from young age inspite of her husband's agnosticism. As such, Bhaiji was praised as the Prince of Bhaktas who gained insight of unusual depths in regard to Mataji's most eventful Life and Her Mission to the World.

The writer's spiritual communion with Mataji started in 1933 when H. H. Swami Ramdas of Anandashram blessed his beloved partner and himself with a beautiful picture of Ma, taken when she was in Bhava-Samadhi. Four years later I was presented with another later picture by a Brahmachari devotee of Hers at Sri Ramanashram to which he had come to do silent meditation for three weeks in Sri Ramana's presence as directed by his Guru Devi. The copy he presented to me was the only one he possessed, and the incident gave me a hazy idea of the close spiritual link between Bhagawan and Mataji. The idea turned into a conviction when she travelled to Sri Ramanashram in 1952 to lay the foundation for the Meditation Hall in front of His Samadhi Temple.

In my simple opinion, the spiritual vibrations of Gouranga, Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi and Ramana Maharshi are being expressed in a supreme and sublime form, through the holy personality of Shree Anandamayee. This may be an imperfect impression of a humble individual like me. I would, therefore, like to conclude this preface with the wise and prophetic words of the two saintly men, Sri Shashibhusan Das Gupta, who, after his first Darshan of Ma in 1926 at Dacca, left on record the following beautiful description:

(1) "I find before me what I have never seen in my whole life. She appears to be the visible embodiment of the Mother of the Universe."

And (2) Sri Bhaktaraja, an old Sadhu of the Ramakrishna Mission, who met Mataji at Vrindaban on 15th March 1957, bowed down, touching the ground with his forehead, addressed the assembled people as follows:

"This time He has come in the shape of a woman. In her body everyone should recognise his own *Ishta*. Our connection with Mataji has not been newly established; it has existed from birth to birth throughout eternity."

The credit of bringing the glorious life of Mataji to the notice of foreigners in Europe and U.S.A. belongs to H. H. Paramhansa Yogananda, the founder of Self-Realisation Fellowship in California. His foremost disciple, Sri Daya Mata, the present President of S.R.F., never misses an opportunity of spending a few days with Sri Ma whenever she visits India from U.S.A.

*Ramana-Manthiram,
Jayanthipuram,
Talangama,
SRI LANKA. 30.4.1976.*

K. Ramachandra
*Hon'y Editor, Atma-Jyothi
Nawalapitiya.*

MATAJI AND PURAN PURUSH AT NAIMISHARANYA

This is not only the story of how an exquisitely beautiful golden-coloured *astadhatu* (eight metals) image of Puran Purush arrived at Naimisharanya at 10 30 P. M. on the 8th of January, 1975 from Calcutta, but also the story of Mataji's infinite mercy and compassion in fulfilling the innermost thoughts of all who happened to be fortunate enough to be in Her vicinity during the ensuing seven days. The holy site of Naimish Kshetra has been hallowed from time immemorial by the Lila of gods and goddesses, and 60,000 wise and learned Rishis continually meditating on God, as related in our ancient scriptures. In fact, there is not a single Purana or Epic, wherein mention of Naimisharanya does not find a prominent place.

On this occasion Mataji extolled the virtues of the site of our Ashram with Her own lips by stating that the place had been rendered sacred in each of the preceding Yugas. In the Satya Yuga, Manu himself and his wife Satarupa, who had no issue, prayed devoutly to God on the banks of the Gomati, near the present temple of Manu at Vyas Gaddi, seeking God's favour in earnest; so much so, that when He finally appeared to the praying couple and graciously told them to ask for any boon, they unswervingly prayed to be granted a son very like the Lord Himself.

In reply the Lord said that it was not possible for anybody to be "like Him", so He would Himself be born to them in each Yuga. Thus in the Treta

Yuga, He came as Sri Rama, and in Dwapar Yuga, as Sri Krishna.

To satisfy certain of those present with modern scientifically inclined minds Mataji went on to describe how three distinctly separate and successive layers of civilisation had been discovered recently while digging two deep tube wells within our Ashram compound. Geologically it can be imagined how the Gomati, in successive generations of flooding, had deposited newer and higher layers of silt on the surrounding areas, possibly resulting in the formation of a mound called Hanuman Tila, next to which our Ashram has been built on a high level locally termed as the 'camp of the Pandavas'. At the peak of Hanuman Tila exists a very ancient Hanuman temple, built like a fort, containing a deep cave inside the temple which is said to have access to the Gomati.

This brings us to the latest known heavy flood that was witnessed during the late monsoon of 1960, after which Mataji was present in Naimisharanya for a wonderful Samyam Saptaha, followed by a magnificent reading of 103 Bhagavatas simultaneously for a week.

This date so far as is known to devotees, can be said to be the origin of how our Naimisharanya Ashram came into being. During a subsequent phase, in November-December 1968, Swami Sri Akhandananda Saraswati held his famous *Bhagavata Parayana Paksha* at our Naimisharanya Ashram, and it was then that the germ of an idea was formed in his mind (possibly through the *kheyala* of Mataji) to request Her to instal an image of Puran Purush to be worshipped in our

Ashram. The statues of Sukdevji and Vyasdevji had then just been erected alongside our library which contains all the Purānas, and a site to the north of the Puran Mandir was earmarked for a Puran Purush Temple.

It will be appreciated that in the secular part of his life Swami Akhandananda had worked as secretary of the Gita Press at Gorakhpur, and had then come across an ancient picture of Puran Purush as depicted by an old artist in a copy of our scriptures. He had later used this picture as a cover page of certain subsequent editions of his religious quarterly "*Ghintamani*".

The Puran Purush, i.e., the heart and soul of all Puranas, or Narayana himself, is pictured as a Brahmin with the aquiline nose of a parrot, seated in *padmasana* pose on an elaborate solid *asana*, resting his back on a bolster, with a suitable canopy as a backdrop. The left hand is raised in *abhaya mudra*—in benediction—and the right hand is placed near the right knee, counting beads. It must be emphasized here that such an image will be unique throughout the length and breadth of India.

With just a copy of this cover picture of Puran Purush we in Calcutta were allotted the task of preparing a two feet high clay model so as to satisfy Mataji's first inspection.

After certain initial fruitless attempts on a small scale, our efforts to fabricate a full-size clay model commenced in earnest in July 1973, and by September a photograph of the model was sent to Swami Paramananda for Mataji's comments. These were

promptly received and the model rectified accordingly, so that the more difficult work of casting the image under the expert guidance of the late Nitai Pal's chief assistant commenced in November 1973.

In the morning of March 6th, 1974, while motoring to Ranaghat from Jodhpur Park, Mataji inspected the freshly cast image of Puran Purush by the roadside from Her car and expressed Her general approval. So the work of casting the three other pieces, namely the *asana*, the back-rest pillow, and the background was then taken up with renewed vigour.

Meanwhile Swami Akhandananda had been keeping indifferent health. So, although the whole image was completed, polished and packed by June 1974, efforts at despatching the three crates concerned were abandoned thereafter until the cold weather of 74-75.

Eventually in December 1974, we received the all clear from Swami Paramananda, and the image was taken out of its packing, repolished and repacked for despatch to Naimisharanya by rail, for possible installation between the 8th and 15th January 1975.

But here again there was a hitch. After his strenuous Kanpur tour, Swami Akhandananda expressed his unwillingness to proceed straightaway with the arduous work of installing Puran Purush in the coldest time of the year. So, although the next auspicious date was fixed for Akshay Tritiya on the 14th May 1975, we were instructed to bring the three crates with us by the Amritsar Mail leaving Calcutta on January 7th.

To collect 200 Kg of net metal packed in crates from a narrow lane in Kumartuli in North Calcutta, and then load them on a particular day in a particular train was too cumbersome an operation except when entrusted to a specialist firm, but in due course, with Swami Swarupananda and myself in a coupé, the ladies of the party including my wife, as well as the two craftsmen responsible for the image in a sleeper, and the crates in the luggage van, the Amritsar Mail steamed out of Howrah on Friday, January 7th.

We were met at Varanasi Station the next morning by Swami Paramananda himself, who supervised the loading of sacrificial *ynjna* fires and *akhanda jyoti* from Varanasi Ashram into our coupé in charge of a Brahmachari. This had all been planned in advance, but we did not plan to arrive at Lucknow more than three hours behind schedule, so that it was 10-30 P.M. by the time the van carrying the Puran Purnsh crates, our luggage, unloading workmen, Dasuda (who had met us at Lucknow) and myself reached Naimisharanya Ashram gates on January 8th.

But Mataji had been up expecting us for hours, and the blowing of conch shells from the hall entrance welcomed the arrival of the future presiding deity into His Ashram abode.

The next morning Mataji was up early, supervising the unloading and opening of the crates. She personally superintended the operations of carefully fitting the pieces together, and of placing the image temporarily on a pedestal to the east of the old temple housing the sacred books. Thereafter She Herself first performed the full rituals of *varan* (i.e. ritualistic

welcome) as is done on the 6th day of Navaratri before the Goddess Durga, and then instructed three other senior Ashram Brahmacharinis to perform the same rituals, including *arati*, before the image. Subsequently She asked all of us including the Sadhus of the Ashram, to bow down in *pranama* before the deity, who looked simply splendid, shining in his new surroundings.

Thereafter She had the image wrapped carefully in layers of fine new white cloth, surmounted by new blue tapestry cloth, the whole encased in a strong rope net barrier, to prevent possible damage during the waiting period upto May next.

The reason became apparent on the 10th and 11th January, the days of *amavasya*, when lakhs of pilgrims thronged into Naimisharanya village, of which a considerable portion found time to visit our Puran Mandir to see the Puran Purush—even though swathed in bandages!

Mataji's frequent visits of late to the Naimisharanya Ashram have encompassed the place with a halo of holiness.

While the Ashram was in the process of being developed, Mataji often moved for quiet and rest into one of the *five kuthias* existing right on the banks of the Gomati below Hanuman Tila, belonging to Her close devotee and Naimisharanya host, Sri Prayag Narain Saigal. During one of Her brief stays there, two miracles had taken place in connection with trees adjoining Her hut.

The first concerned an *amlakhi*-tree, which had possibly been struck in the distant past by lightning, and all that remained was a five feet high withered and rotten stump. Immediately after Mataji's visit a new green sprout appeared to grow out of the top of the stump, and this has now blossomed out into a huge new *amlakhi*-tree, bearing flowers and fruits although the original withered stump remains unchanged as a mute testimony to the miracle. (vide the story of the hollow bakul-tree at Puri where Haridas, the saint, lived and died in the sixteenth century, in the presence of Mahaprabhu Sri Krishna Chaitanya).

The second miracle concerns a neem-tree adjacent to which Mataji's temporary bathroom was erected during Her stay. And now in Mataji's own words:

"Pitaji, one night as I was lying in the hut, I saw two *murtis* come down the neem-tree and bend low, as if to have a drink. The next morning the neem-tree fell down for no apparent reason, but you can go and see the remains above ground even today, to testify that there was once a tree there."

Who can tell who were the imprisoned souls that were liberated by the holy touch of Mataji's presence that day, more or less as the child Sri Krishna liberated the twin Jamal-Arjuna trees in Vrindaban in *Dwapara Yuga*?

During this visit Mataji, in a lavish mood of benediction, continued to bestow Her boundless Grace on all who asked for it.

Someone wanted to play the mridangam in Her presence, so as to be blessed by Her in this ambition, and promptly She created such a situation that at the frequent kirtans that followed, somehow there would be nobody else present to accompany the singing except the person concerned, although there were other more accomplished players in residence among the ashramites. The highlight took place on the 14th morning, when Mataji sang Her favourite hymn "Hey Bhagavan" to celebrate the first *yajna* in the newly inaugurated *yajna-shala* in front of a large congregation, and when the devotee in question was privileged to accompany Her on the mridangam for the first time in his life,

A devotee wished to have *darsana* of renowned sages, and take part in intimate satsang with them. So, while he was walking along the heights of Hanuman Tila on the 10th of Jan, he espied a venerable and resplendent saint in saffron, surrounded by his disciples, giving a fascinating discourse on Sri Rama and singing Sri Rama's name in great veneration, on the banks of the Gomati. This Mahatma was none other than Swami Sri Sri Shivadeva Ashram of Varanasi, passing through Naimisharanya for a day or two over *amavasya*. The Mahatma was gracious enough to think nothing of breaking off his discourse to give ten minutes of wise counsel to the devotee in question in answer to the latter's unspoken queries.

The same devotee later had a similar experience while visiting Swami Sri Naradananda Saraswati, the long standing and well-known saint of the Gurukul Vidyalaya in Naimisharanya, who has now handed over charge to his able successor Swami Vivekananda, and who has lived for over 40 years in a grass hut

inside his 100 bigha Ashram, exactly like the Rishis of old, while his subordinates have to occupy pucca buildings.

Both Swami Naradananda and Swami Vivekananda visited our Ashram subsequently at Mataji's invitation, on January, 14th and gave very interesting talks, the former on Shankara's Vedanta, and the latter on Tulsidasa's Rāmāyana.

When the devotee in question went to perform his obeisance at the feet of Swami Naradananda on arrival at the Ashram, the Mahatma, with a wonderfully sweet smile, placed around the devotee's neck the garland he had just received from Mataji.

The two master craftsmen, father and son, from Calcutta, primarily responsible for casting the image of Puran Purush, were amply rewarded by Mataji's *darsana* and wise counsel and enjoyed a free trip to Lucknow for a day or two on the way back home on request.

A devotee wished to spend an appreciable time in solitude doing japa under the famous peepul-tree in Vas Gaddi under which past sages of Naimisharanya are said to have delivered their learned discourses. In spite of the heavy influx of visitors over *amavasya*, his wishes were amply fulfilled to his heart's content.

Another devotee arrived in the evening of January 14th without notice, out of the blue, straight from London, by pure chance. He had no difficulty in finding accommodation in the *dharmasala* for his family and himself, and was duly initiated by Mataji on the 15th morning before departing for Dehradun.

Yet another devotee, a heavily engaged businessman, had arrived by air without adequate bedding etc. in the intense cold, and Mataji arranged his room in the *dharmasala* next to ours, and provided him and his wife with Her own spare bedding which She conjured up from somewhere within the Ashram premises at a moment's notice.

The same devotee wished to perform his own private *yajna* on the 14th during the time the new *yajna shala* was being inaugurated with *vastu homa* and *Savitri yajna*. His wife had also had a prior dream, and wished to offer special *pujā* to the seven Rishis (Saptarshis) of the Yuga on the same day. Both their wishes were completely fulfilled by the Grace of Mataji.

A devotee had an intense desire to be present in front of Mataji inside the *yajna-shala* at the sacred moment of *purnahuti* (the final *havan*), but he found himself mixed up with multitudinous throng that had gathered outside the *Yajna-shala* during satsang with Swami Vivekananda. Soon after, Mataji suddenly entered the *Yajna-shala*, and the main doors closed behind Her,

The devotee in question prayed silently for succour, and immediately Mataji personally opened the small closed side-gate near which the devotee was quietly standing outside, and She at once sped away like lightning to Her legitimate place in front of the sacrificial fire. It was then a simple operation for the devotee to slip inside, lock the sidegate behind him, and enjoy the holy moment of *purnahuti* in peace in the presence of Mataji, exactly as he had longed for all that morning.

Another strong and active devotee wished to perform manual labour by filling the lower levels of the compound with earth and by felling and clearing unwanted trees from the lower levels of the Ashram garden, with his gang of labourers and a lorry. Mataji let him have this pleasure to his heart's content throughout Her stay.

Yet another devotee, living in Lucknow, had been unable to find suitable transport to, and accommodation in Naimisharanya to meet his requirements, but the Governor himself offered to bring him and his wife to Mataji in his car, and invited them to stay as his guests in the dak bungalow at Naimisharanya. At the conclusion of Mataji's stay, he also transported them back to Lucknow.

Finally His Excellency, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Dr. Chinna Reddy, wished to celebrate his birthday on January 13th, in Mataji's presence. So he arrived at Naimisharanya on the 12th evening and left on the 15th morning, having had continuous *darsana* of Mataji throughout his stay, and having enjoyed the frequent kirtans performed by the Ashram girls at Mataji's request, since he was known to be exceptionally fond of devotional music.

One evening, during satsang with Mataji in the Governor's presence, Mataji turned round and said to His Excellency, "Pitaji, all classes of people come to visit this body, some may be Governors, like you, others may be senior executives of big companies (pointing to a devotee) and yet others may be busy businessmen (looking towards another devotee), and so on."

The Governor may have wished th let Mataji use his car as often as possible. So, much to our astonishment and to the consternation of those senior Ashramites whose duty it is to guard Her person zealously, She decided to go to Lucknow Station in the evening of the 15th of January from the house of Sri Rameshwar Sahai all by Herself, solely with the Governor and his A.D.Cs, unaccompanied by any Brahmacharis or Brahmacharinis.

In this context, a fascinating facet of Mataji's unusual and all-embracing activities cannot be omitted.

On the morning of January 15th, at our Ashram, after having undergone all the previous heavy programme, and after initiating that very morning between 7-30 and 9 A M. at least three people to my knowledge inside the Puran Mandir, She spent two solid hours between 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. sitting on an unkempt seat in an unswept kitchen, sorting out with Brahmacharini Ganga the stores that would be required by Ashram inmates remaining behind after Her departure for the next few months.

When devotees are engaged wholeheartedly in the service of Mataji, it is well-known that minor miracles take place almost continually, whenever hitches of any sort are encountered.

We were a large party. and our bookings from Calcutta had been finalised well in advance through a specialist agency. But we were worried about our return rail bookings. particu'arly as three extra Ashramites, Visuddha, Pushpa and Pushpa's uncle were told to accompany us.

Here the Sahais of Lucknow proved to be a tower of strength, and did all that was necessary and even more. But as our return rail bookings could only be made some time after our arrival, I was anxious to send word to my son at home about a definite date on which to meet us at Howrah with transport. Miraculously, a very kind P. W. D. official visiting the site opposite our Ashram one morning soon after our arrival, offered to send a telegram on my behalf to Calcutta from Lucknow, after verifying from the Sahais the exact date of our booking.

The most difficult part of the return journey was getting out of Naimisharanya. All our immature plans for the morning of January 15th went astray, but no sooner had we finished our midday meal at the Ashram, than a second taxi, over and above Panuda's requirements, suddenly turned up from nowhere, seemingly predestined to take our party together with all our luggage to Sitapur, from where we easily managed to get seats in a luxury bus to Lucknow.

However, I was still anxious about our heavy transport arrangements to Lucknow Station on the morning of January 16th, but thanks to Mataji's grace, an old colleague whom I had not met since retiring ten years ago, and who had—unknown to me—settled down in Lucknow, turned up at the Sahais' residence on the 15th evening to greet Mataji. I was overjoyed to see him, and he was mainly instrumental in transporting all our heavy luggage to the station on the 16th, in addition to driving us there in his car. But for his help, I could not have loaded all that huge amount of luggage into our sleeper, or found our

alloted seats. or settled down comfortably, within the comparatively short space of time the down Amritsar Mail stops at Lucknow.

Meanwhile the Varanasi Ashram knew we were travelling on the down train through Varanasi Station on the 16th evening, but they could not be informed in time that Pushpa was with us, destined to get down at Varanasi, and I was reluctant to leave her alone on the platform without any escort. But luckily, through Mataji's *kheyala*, a friend from Varanasi had taken the trouble of ascertaining from the Ashram the exact date and hour of our passing through, and met us at the station, so that it was simple to arrange for him to escort Pushpa to the Ashram on his way home.

Finally, as far as our Naimisharanya Ashram is concerned, all eyes are looking forward to the week from 9th to 16th of May, 1975, during which Puran Purushji is going to be installed in the beautiful new temple already completed to the north of the Puran Mandir.

It will be difficult for Calcutta devotees, preparing feverishly for Mataji's Birthday Celebrations at Agarpara, to be present at Naimisharanya immediately before. But let us see what Puran Purushji and Mataji hold in store for us, for it is only by their special grace that we are destined to witness any of these special ceremonies, anywhere at any time.

Jai Puran Purushji

Jai Ma

PART II

For a Time let Religion be our only Politics!

“Ma Anandamayee was in Madras the other day with Her devotees and it was wonderful to note how deeply she impressed men and women who went for Her *darshan*.”

—Sri C. Rajagopalachari,
the first Indian Viceroy of India.

(in the weekly ‘*Swarajya*’ of Jan. 22nd 1972)

+ + +
“Words fail to express in entirety the Peace that was the core of the Mother’s being, and the love that she radiated outside throughout her stay. Those peaceful eyes and compassionate smile will ever remain verdant in our memories. We tender our *Pranamas* at Her lotus feet.”

(by another writer in the same Journal)

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During the three days of Mataji’s sojourn in Madras, She was accommodated in a lovely wooden cottage, specially built in the picturesque Kalki Gardens, belonging to Sri Sathasivam and Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi.

(On Her earlier visit to South India in 1952, she went to Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvcnamalai, to perform the Foundation laying ceremony of the Meditation Hall at Bhagawan Sri Ramana Samadhi).

The President and Governer seek Mataji's blessings.

On 23rd June 1961, when Her Holiness Shree Anandamayee was in Poona, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, accompanied by Sri Sri Prakash, Governor of Maharashtra, visited Her for Her blessings.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad said "Please give us some instructions that wil help us on the spiritual path". Mataji replied: "Pitaji, this body* does not give instructions. Nevertheless, quite often in the course of conversation something is said in a very informal and unconventional manner."

Sri Sri Prakashji asked: "Mataji. I have a problem which I put to every wise or learned person whenever I get the chance. We encounter so much fraud, deceit and dishonesty. How can the spiritual life develop in the midst of all this?" Mataji gradually warmed up to the reply, "Pitaji, this reminds me of something that occurred years ago. This body was then in Mussoorie. One day while going for a walk it saw lots and lots of of children playing in a games field. Suddenly, at the sound of a bell, they all stood as still as stones, wherever they happened to be. This was an example of self-control. So long as the Brahmacharya Ashram is not lived fully as it should be, day after day, man's life cannot be moulded according to proper laws and regulations. If the first of the four Ashrams is not lived in the right manner, then, just as when the foundation of a house is not built, the house is in danger of collapsing, so also when the foundation of human life is not properly laid, lots of difficulties keep on arising."

*Mataji always refers to her person 'as this body'. and addresses all males, whether young or old as 'Pithaji' (father).

SHREE ANANDAMAYEE MA-

She stands at the parting of ways.

by Sri Jyotish C. Roy

It is beyond our common intelligence to comprehend what Mother stands for and what she is in reality. Though she always says: "I am only a crazy little daughter of yours," still in all her ways of life, in her ever delightful *Lila* amongst us, all the powers of the Divine find expression in tangible forms.

In Mother we find a perennial fountain of joy and sweetness, though she is surrounded day and night by the noise and bustle and a thousand entreaties of all classes of people. Her calm and serene looks, her gracious, ever smiling response to all queries, her exquisite sense of humour bring satisfaction and delight to every soul. Her ways of life are so universal and all-embracing that she may be called Motherly Love Incarnate.

Some say that she is the Supreme Goddess of the Universe in human form. Others again are of the opinion that she has reached perfection through spontaneous psychic evolution without any effort on her part. To us she appears to be whatever anybody may consider her to be. At the first sight of her, one becomes animated with a religious fervour, even if one happens to be almost impervious to spiritual ideas. In

her presence thoughts of God and his glory flourish with all their brilliance in hearts as dry as dust and the vibrations of one universal, all pervading life overpower one's heart, as it were, with endless surges like a vast ocean of bliss.

When at one time she was asked who her preceptor was, or from whom she had received initiation, she remarked: "In earlier years my parents were my guides; in household life, my husband; and now in every situation of life, all men and things of the world are my *Guru*. But one thing is certain, the one Supreme Being is the only Guide for all."

From the standpoint of worldly people Mother is an ideal daughter, wife and mother. To an aspirant after spiritual life, her words and behaviour have deep significance, indicating various modes of spiritual culture and yogic practices, as well as the basic truths of dualism, non-dualism, dualistic monism and other philosophic doctrines. The physical changes that become manifest in her body lead one to the inference that she is a confirmed *Vaisnava*; in the Tantric worship of *Siva*, *Kali*, *Durga* and other gods and goddesses or in the performance of Vedic Religious sacrifices she has evoked admiration from eminent philosophers of the East and West. The only difference that we notice between Mother and the Great Masters who have reached perfection through *bhakti yoga*, *jnana yoga* or *karma yoga* in their special lines lies in the fact that in Mother all the paths of *sadhana* have reached a wonderful synthesis. It is through this harmony of the various modes of approach to the Divine that all types of people receive inspiration from Her presence.

Her genial and sweet appearance; her uncommon patience and endurance, her spirit of sacrifice and simplicity, her ever joyful, humourous ways of dealing with men, women and children, her unsullied, clear vision and good-will for all living beings, her love for all men irrespective of caste, creed, community and nationality, her absolute freedom from pleasure, pain and the like, make her a unique figure in modern times. One cannot say that she has attained perfection through self effort, for, those who have watched her from her infancy assert that she has been the same in her thoughts and actions all through her life. No body has yet seen her perform spiritual or religious exercises of any kind.

The natural or super-natural phenomena that became manifest in her body occurred spontaneously for the welfare of all human beings. Those manifestations did not depend upon her will nor did they function against it, nor were they the result of any devotional effort on her part. When clarified butter with other oblations are offered into the fire on the altar, the flame flares up by a natural law, but the perfume that emanates, purifies and enlivens the whole atmosphere. After a little while no trace of the sacrificial offerings remain, but the flames keep on burning in purity and brightness. In exactly the same manner when Mother's devotees bring their offerings to her feet with the best of their love and reverence, the very touch of these gifts, causes the fountain of her heart to burst forth, like the natural flow of milk from the mother's breast at the touch of her infant's lips. So in the case of Mother, her speech, her looks, her face,

all express love for her children. With a divine flame her face brightens up for a time and soon after resumes its normal composure.

There is no conflict in her, no urge to action or inaction disturbs the serenity of her will. She is completely steeped in the light of that Supreme Truth which forms the bed-rock of all principles and practices of religion and of the moral codes of the world and which has been revealed to the human mind in different ages for the good of the universe. A glimpse of that Truth, a suggestion thereof shines forth in all her actions, words and songs. Her life illustrates the great fact that man, while doing his everyday duties meekly, joyfully, and maintaining social relations can yet advance on the spiritual path.

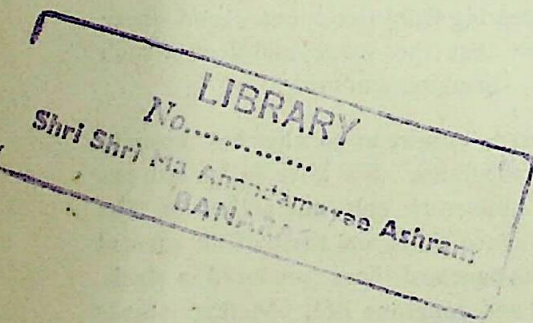
The time has arrived for us to take stock of the amount of good that is being done to our social-life by the crowds of people that are swelling the number of *sannyasis* and *sadhus*. Stepping out of the boundaries of family life and the pale of civic rights and responsibilities, to try to open up easy paths of spiritual uplift for family, society and nation is not a very simple matter. There are persons who have reached high levels of spiritual greatness by retiring from the world and living a life of seclusion in solitary Ashrams or mountain caves. Their individual greatness does not pull up the general level of culture of the masses of people to any appreciable extent, nor are the standards of mass-life raised higher. Through their inspiration many Ashrams are established in different parts of the country, the spires of the temples erected therein may shoot up high into the sky, the glamour of worship and the hymns and devotional

music sung morning and evening induce many people from far and near to spend more and more money upon the enterprise, free distribution of *prasada* may attract crowds of hungry men like flies from the surrounding regions. But the influence of such institutions built up at the expense of so much labour and money hardly helps to make our social life healthier and brighter, neither by spreading knowledge and literacy nor greater love for man nor again by fostering a more ardent desire for the life Divine. Our society is getting more and more crippled through mutual jealousy, rivalry and petty squabbles over trifles. Those who are strong at heart with a spirit of social responsibility and selfless service, hardly find scope for real and efficient social work, being half paralysed by stagnant, social ideas of the class seclusion of orthodox olden times. On the other hand one meets at every step opposition to all efforts at reform. The culture by which physical and mental health is made secure, which makes man strong and hardy through the realization God's grace in all walks of life, which refines and transforms our narrow, selfish impulses into an unselfish spirit of service and self-sacrifice irrespective of caste and creed is fast disappearing from our country and there is hardly any doubt that the scope and field of such culture is gradually shrinking amongst us.

It is time for us to enquire as to what has brought about such a state of affairs, We have fallen into the narrow grooves of time-worn cults and prejudices. The ideas and ideals of olden times and those of the present age have met face to face and have produced a slack-water in our social and religious life, Mother stands at the parting of the ways.....

She shows equal regard and reverence for all religions, for all social institutions and laws, for all types of education. This illustrates the great truth that everything in this world is the embodiment of one Supreme Being. She says: "All religious thoughts flow in one direction, as all streams flow into one ocean; and we are all one." If anybody puts the question to her: "To what caste do you belong? where is your home?" Mother at once answers with a laugh: *"From your worldly standpoint this body belongs to East Bengal and is Brahmin by caste; but if you think apart from these artificial distinctions you will understand that this body is a member of the one human family."*

(Extracted from the concluding chapter of his inspiring book,
"Mother as revealed to me".)



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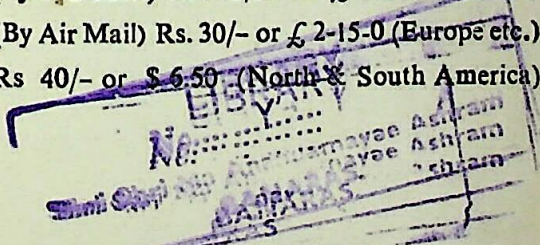
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WHO IS A TRUE SANNYASI?

A sannyasi is he who ever dwells in the void (sunya). One who has taken sannyasa, yet all the time depends on others, is merely attempting to become a sannyasi. A genuine sannyasi is he who in God's Name has set his all afloat in the void.

So long as one harbours desires for home and family, for money and the things it buys, for bodily comforts and intellectual enjoyment, for fame, recognition and the like, it is far better to remain within the folds of the family. There are only very few who can tread the path of complete renunciation.

Those who have gone forth into homelessness without having become utterly unselfish and are therefore unable to observe the prescribed rules of conduct of the sannyasasrama, will create all manners of complications. To be a householder with the spirit of sannyasa is indeed very praiseworthy.

But the man who merely assumes the ochre robe without being a sannyasi at heart becomes guilty of a serious wrong. Not only does he harm himself, his behaviour also is contrary to the ideal of the sacred order of sannyasa.

—Ma Anandamayee

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